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ACTIVE LISTENING

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CLASS ACTIVITY

- Complete instructions are on page
- The instructor will pair you off
- Agree on which of the two of you will be the “halfway house director” which the neighbor
- Read your own role; don’t read the other role
- Play your roles – your job is to convince the other person you are right

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE FEEL RESISTED?

- They feel compelled to repeat whatever they felt was not acknowledged
- They “escalate” -- more emotional language; voice tone sarcastic; volume increases.
- They become more accusatory.
- Their position becomes more rigid and fixed.
- They become less open to alternatives.
- They start seeing others as the enemy.

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ROADBLOCKS TO LISTENING

- Ordering, demanding
- Warning, threatening
- Admonishing, moralizing
- Persuading, arguing, lecturing
- Criticizing, judging, evaluating
- Interpreting, diagnosing

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ROADBLOCKS TO LISTENING - Continued

- Advising, giving answers, offering solutions
- Criticizing, disagreeing, contradicting
- Praising, agreeing
- Reassuring, sympathizing
- Probing, questioning
- Sarcasm, kidding, humor
- Diverting, avoiding

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WAYS TO ACKNOWLEDGE

- Summarize your understanding of what people are thinking and feeling.
- Record a summary on a flip chart.
- Use the flip chart summary as the record of the meeting.

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ACTIVE LISTENING

- Summarize, rather than judge, what the other person is saying
- Summarize both feelings and ideas
- Avoid lead-in phrases – “I hear you saying…”
- Choose words that match the intensity of the feeling

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WHY MEETING LEADERS USE ACTIVE LISTENING

- If there is no acknowledgement, people feel incomplete and unsatisfied
- Disagreeing causes escalation
- Agreeing can alienate someone else in the audience
- Active Listening creates an environment in which people begin to share interests, not just positions

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WHEN IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO SUMMARIZE FEELINGS

- Voice tone or word choice shows high intensity
- Repeating the same point
- When people say they are not being understood

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HOW AUDIENCES REACT TO MEETING LEADERS

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WHEN A MEETING LEADER MUST INTERVENE

- Group has drifted off the agreed-upon topic
- People are interrupting each other
- Comments exceed agreed-upon time limits
- Comments are insulting
- Remind the group of time limits
- To propose the use of a technique

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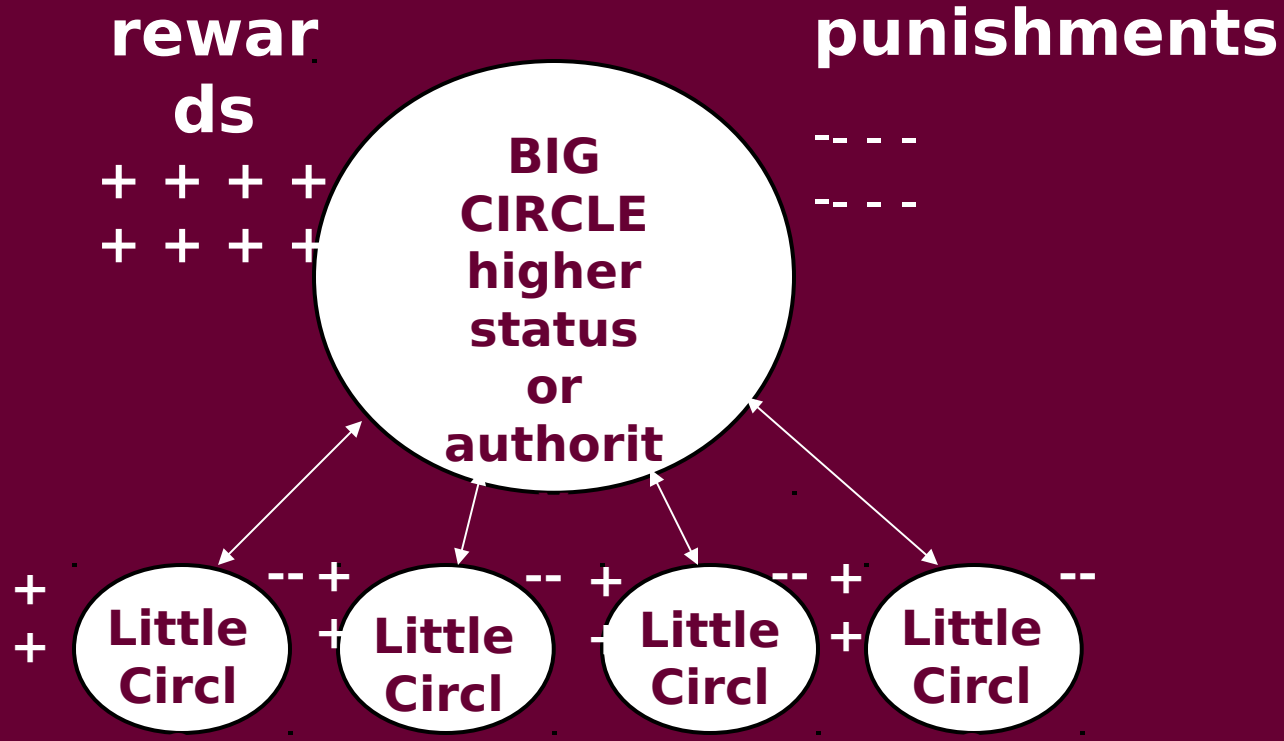
THE PROBLEM WITH USING POWER



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THIS CAN LEAD TO "EQUALIZING BEHAVIORS"

- "Cutting down to size" – constant attacks
- Teaming-up in opposition
- Finding another "bigger circle," e.g. courts
- Withdrawal
- Passive/aggressive – no open opposition, but constant undermining, delays, nit-picking

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AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

“Equalizing behavior” is a key dynamic between agencies, and between supporters and opponents

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OVERNIGHT ASSIGNMENT

- Carefully read the case study assigned to your team
- Think about roles you would like to play, and key issues you would like to see discussed

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WEDNESDAY

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COMMUNICATING CONCERNS

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BEHAVIORS MEETING LEADERS SHOULD AVOID

- Judging, admonishing
- Proposing solutions without giving a reason that makes sense from the audience's perspective
- Using power

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WHEN A MEETING LEADER JUDGES OR USES POWER

- It stimulates equalizing behaviors
- The impact is exaggerated due to the psychological size of the meeting leader
- People feel “put down” in front of their friends and peers

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COMMUNICATING CONCERNS

- Send the problem, not the solution
- Communicate a feeling – appropriate to your role as a facilitator - not a judgment
- “Own” your feelings
- Describe behavior instead of evaluating it

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THE MODEL

I feel (ownership) + feeling word + behavioral description (and sometimes) + suggestion

AN EXAMPLE

“I’m frustrated because I would like to have a lot of interaction, but I’m also concerned that people aren’t getting a chance to complete their comments without interruption. Perhaps you could raise your hands and let me call on you.”

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CLASS ACTIVITY

- Complete instructions are on page
- Silently, write what you would say if you were the facilitator
- Pick a partner
- Discuss how best to send concerns without creating defensiveness or putting people down